



National Brownfields Assessment Pilot

Charlotte, NC

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Between 1995 and 1996, EPA funded 76 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. EPA is funding more than 27 Pilots in 1997. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the City of Charlotte for a Brownfields Pilot. The Brownfields pilot area is adjacent to uptown in the Wilmore neighborhood/South End business district, which includes Charlotte's earliest industrial area, dating back to the late 1800's. Brownfields redevelopment is an important component of Charlotte's effort to revitalize its urban neighborhoods, which are showing significant signs of economic distress and physical deterioration. Approximately \$1.5 million public dollars in physical improvements within the South End area have leveraged the private redevelopment of several mills into retail, entertainment, and residential uses. However, there are many brownfields sites where redevelopment has yet to occur.

OBJECTIVES

The City of Charlotte plans to return brownfields properties to productive use by creating jobs, contributing to the tax base, providing needed community services, and creating environmentally safe sites. The City is establishing clear guidelines for appropriate levels of clean up on selected sites through community consensus and innovative remediation plans. Additionally, the City is developing a framework for environmental risk decisions to educate lenders on

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Charlotte, North Carolina

Date of Award:
September 1996

Amount: \$200,000

Site Profile: The Pilot targets redevelopment efforts in the City's Wilmore neighborhood and South End business district.

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Visit the EPA Brownfields Website at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

managing brownfields “risk” for private sector investment. Volunteer partners (including law firms, lending institutions, and colleges and universities) provide assistance with addressing potential regulatory barriers.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot has:

- Produced a segment on the Brownfields Project for the public access television talk show which discussed the impact of brownfields redevelopment in Charlotte and announced the first community meeting;
- Held the first community meeting, which was attended by more than 130 residents and property owners. A second meeting, which focused on defining risk and contamination was a joint effort by the Brownfields Partners, and was attended by more than 60 people. Partners presented information on the environmental and liability content and staffed tables for participants to ask specific questions at the end of the meeting;
- Created a team to select the actual brownfields sites based on input from the community meetings and the criteria cited in the work plan. A representative from each of the following groups is included in the team: South End Development Corporation, Wilmore Neighborhood Association, West Enterprise Community, Dilworth Community Development Corporation, the Sierra Club, a real estate industry representative, a banker, and an environmental engineer;
- Completed a windshield survey of vacant and available sites within the project area; and
- Created a Brownfields Project logo as a community outreach tool, invitations to the first community meeting for mailing, door hangers, and reminder postcards in conjunction with efforts to publicize the community meetings.

The Pilot is:

- Completing assessments and remediation plans for two or more sites in the Brownfields Pilot area and promote these sites for redevelopment; and
- Conducting additional community meetings for community residents.

LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

Experience with the Charlotte Pilot has been the catalyst for related activities including the following.

- North Carolina Citizens for Business and Industry has continued its efforts to draft State legislation that would simplify the regulatory review process and offer covenants not-to-sue to owners whose remediation plans have been completed. City staff have participated in ongoing dialogues with North Carolina Department of Environmental Health and Natural Resources regarding proposed State legislation.
- The Regulatory/Financial Committee and the City of Charlotte hosted a bankers forum to identify banking issues on brownfields redevelopment. Representatives of nine banks attended.
- Held a Brownfields Partners meeting which focused on North Carolina’s Legislation updates.
- Wilmore neighborhood youth assisted in the Pilot outreach by hand-delivering 1,000 community meeting invitations to area residents.
- Using EPA model “Covenants Not to Sue” and “Prospective Purchaser Agreements” to design models that are accepted by North Carolina regulators.